

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1972

INFO USCINCSO

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 3885

GUATEMALA FOR CHARGE TO PASS AMBASSADOR LOZANO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, ES

SUBJECT: PLOTTING REVOLVING AROUND RODRIGUEZ AFFAIR

REF: (A) IR 6 829 0080 76 AUG 25, (B) SAN SALVADOR 2301

1. REF DAO MESSAGE DEALT WITH INFORMATION, CONVEYED BY ANONYMOUS ENCRYPTED MESSAGE TO THE FAMILIES OF COL. MANUEL A. RODRIGUEZ AND MICHAEL CELIS (ALLEGED CO-CONSPIRATORS IN ARMS SALES PLOT), WHICH IMPLIES THAT AN UNKNOWN GROUP IS CONCEIVABLY PLANNING TO: (Q) "RESCUE" COL. RODRIGUEZ BY KIDNAPPING A US MISSION OFFICIAL AND MAKING A TRADE; AND (2) STAGE A COUP AGAINST THE PRESENT REGIME. FURTHER IMPLICATION OF THE INFORMATION IS THAT A GROUP OF JUNIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, ADMIRERS OF COL RODRIGUEZ, ARE INVOLVED.

2. ALTHOUGH THE PURPORTED KIDNAP PLOT MIGHT APPEAR IRRATIONAL, I.E., WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO FOR COL. RODRIGUEZ TO BE RELEASED UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES) THE EMBASSY IS NEVERTHELESS UNABLE TO DISMISS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH PLANNING IS GOING ON. IF IT IS, THE EMBASSY WOULD AGREE THAT THE LIKELIHOOD IS ALSO

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GREAT THAT YOUNG OFFICERS WOULD BE INVOLVED. THE EVIDENCE FOR

THIS WOULD BE: (1) IN THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER COL. RODRIGUEZ' ARREST, THE EMBASSY WAS AWARE THAT GROUPS OF YOUNG CAPTAINS WERE DISCUSSING SOME PRETTY WILD SCHEMES TO REMOVE THIS "STRAIN" ON THEIR INSTITUTION'S HONOR. THESE INCLUDED EVERYTHING FROM COMMANDO RAIDS IN NEW YORK TO KIDNAP-EXCHANGE PLOTS. (2) IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE ANY OTHER GROUP THAT FEELS SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE FATE OF RODRIGUEZ EXCEPT PERHAPS THE FAMILY ITSELF, ESPECIALLY RODRIGUEZ' 19 YEAR OLD SON WHO MAY BE IN CONTACT WITH YOUNG MILITARY OFFICERS ON THE PLOT. THE EMBASSY HAD BELIEVED THAT THE YOUNG OFFICERS HAD CALMED DOWN AFTER THEIR ORIGINAL REACTIONS. SEVERAL TOLD EMOFFS THEY REALIZED THAT CARRYING OUT ANY OF THE ORIGINAL SCHEMES COULD ONLY BRING GREATER DISGRACE TO THE MILITARY INSTITUTION. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NOT ALL WERE SO CONVINCED.

3. FOR THE ABOVE REASONS, THE EMBASSY HAS TIGHTENED ITS PERSONAL SECURITY MEASURES IN LOW KEY AND IS RECHECKING ALL PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT.

4. ON THE QUESTION OF EVALUATING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PURPORTED PLANNING TO USE THE RODRIGUEZ AFFAIR, OR A RELATED KIDNAPPING, TO PRECIPITATE A COUP AGAINST MOLINA, THE EMBASSY IS MORE SCEPTICAL. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, VICE MINISTER AND CHIEF-OF-STAFF SAW THE PROSECUTION VIEDEO TAPE AND ARE CONVINCED OF RODRIGUEZ' GUILT. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SENIOR MILITARY COMMANDERS, THOSE WITH TROOP COMMANDS, BELIEVE OTHERWISE OR WOULD JOIN THOSE JUNIOR OFFICERS WHO DO. IF COUP PLOTTING IS GOING ON AT THE PRESENT TIME WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS, IT IS INFINITELY MORE LIKELY A CONSEQUENCE OF THE REGIME'S AGRARIAN REFORM PLANS RATHER THAN ITS "ABANDONMENT" OF COL. RODRIGUEZ. THE EMBASSY IS AWARE OF HEATED DISCUSSION AMONG MILITARY OFFICERS, AT ALL LEVELS, ON ISTA, AND AS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST PROJECT NEARS, WE CAN EXPECT MORE. IN CONCLUSION, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THAT A COUP ATTEMPT, PERPETRATED BY ANGRY YOUNG CAPTAINS AND BASED SOLELY ON THE DETENTION OF COL. RODRIGUEZ, IS LIKELY OR STANDS ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS. DATT CONCURS THIS MESSAGE.

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